SD11
.A1
A42
No.495

United States
Department
of Agriculture

Forest Service

Washington, DC
FS-495

The National Forests — Ending Their First Century

The Forest Service in 1990

Chuck Frear and his daughter fish at Timothy Lake on the Mount Hood National Forest in Oregon. Facilities like this barrier-free pier will help provide a greater mix of recreational opportunities. Photo by Tom Iraci

INTRODUCTION

The National Forest System was born nearly 100 years ago with the passage of the Forest Reserve Act of 1891 and creation of the first Forest Reserves that year by President Benjamin Harrison. At that time, many Americans believed their country would be headed for a shortage of both timber and clean water if some land were not protected from exploitation. Other Americans were convinced that timber and water were unlimited. They were opposed to bringing large tracts of land under Federal management. No one at the time guessed that half a billion acres of land would eventually come under Federal control or that the system of national forests would grow to include 191 million acres of land in 44 States.

As the National Forest System has approached the end of its first century, the controversy over the "proper balance" between the use and preservation of our Nation's national forests and grasslands has grown even more intense. Recent debates have centered on such tough issues as the spotted owl and other threatened or endangered species, old-growth forests, clearcutting, below-cost timber sales, roadless areas, and biological diversity. This interplay of opinions continued through 1990, the 30th anniversary celebration of the Multiple Use-Sustained Yield Act. In the midst of the debate over these controversial issues, the Forest Service worked on two fronts. First, it worked to create a planning mechanism that could chart a course for the 1990's and beyond. Second, it worked to manage the land in a way that would take into account America's growing interest in such uses of the land as outdoor recreation and habitat for fish and wildlife, while still meeting America's needs for traditional commodities such as timber and minerals.

RESOURCES PLANNING ACT

The long-term strategic planning of the Forest Service is done under the authority of

LIBRARY COPY
ROCKY MTN. FOREST & RANGE
EXPERIMENT STATION

the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act (RPA) of 1974. The RPA directs the Forest Service to develop two documents: A comprehensive assessment of the quantity, condition, and predicted needs of the Nation's renewable resources (every 10 years), and a recommended Forest Service program response to the assessment every 5 years.

We published the most recent Assessment in 1989. It included the following general conclusions:

- Demand for most renewable resources will increase, reflecting general increases in population and economic activity.
- Domestic supplies for most renewable resources will increase enough to meet our needs with only moderate increases in international trade.
- We have many opportunities to expand our supplies of resources through changes in resource management, some at high cost, others with relatively small investment.
- These opportunities to expand supplies depend on changes in the management of private lands as well as public lands.

In the 1989 Assessment, we identified particular challenges in recreation opportunities, rangeland condition, softwood timber supplies, management of nonindustrial private land, nonpoint-source water pollution, regional water supplies, fish habitat and populations, and wetlands and riparian areas.

In 1990, we issued a new long-term strategic plan based on our 1989 Assessment. In the 1990 RPA Program, we emphasized four high-priority themes:

- Enhancing recreation, wildlife, and fisheries resources.
- Ensuring that commodity protection is done in an environmentally acceptable manner.
- Improving scientific knowledge about natural resources.
- Responding to global resource issues.

FOREST PLANNING

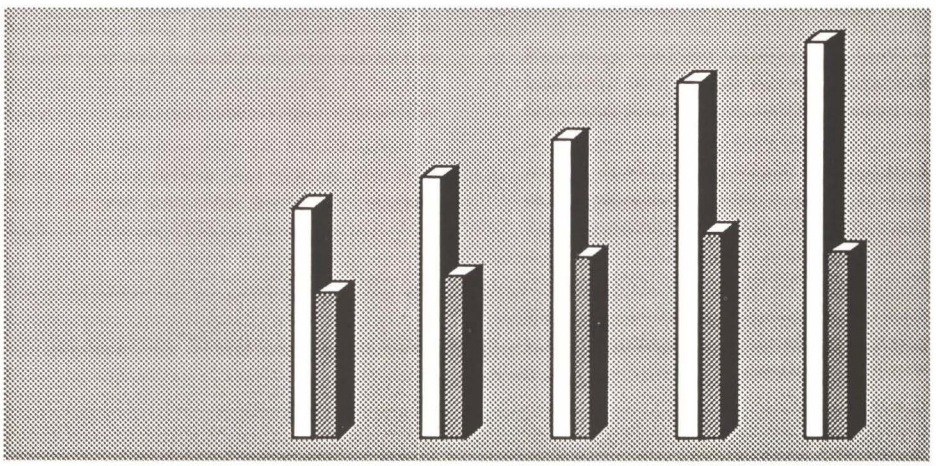
In response to the Resources Planning Act of 1974 and the National Forest Management Act (NFMA) of 1976, we have been issuing forest plans for each of the 123 administrative units in the National Forest System. Issuing and revising these plans is a continuing process, addressing changing resource demands and using public input.

We are approaching the end of the first round of this planning process. During 1990, we issued 18 final forest plans (1 in the Pacific Southwest Region, 15 in the Pacific Northwest Region, and 2 in the Intermountain Region), bringing the total of final plans to 114. Draft plans have been issued for seven national forests in California, leaving only one national forest in Oregon without a draft plan. In 1990, we also issued a draft revision of the plan for the Tongass National Forest in Alaska. We had issued the final plan for the Tongass in 1979.

In 1990, we completed a year-long evaluation of our land management planning system. The study, based on contributions from more than 3,500 individuals and interest groups and governmental bodies, produced 9 principles of good planning:

- Planning should integrate and balance resource allocations, rather than pitting one resource against another.
- Planning should generate a clear vision of each national forest's ability to make unique contributions to meeting local, regional, and national needs.
- Planning should recognize the limits to the productive capacity of the national forests.
- Planning should seek the informed consent of people by inviting their contributions continuously, explaining decisions openly, and encouraging open dialog between groups representing disparate interests.

Forest Service Expenditures and Receipts



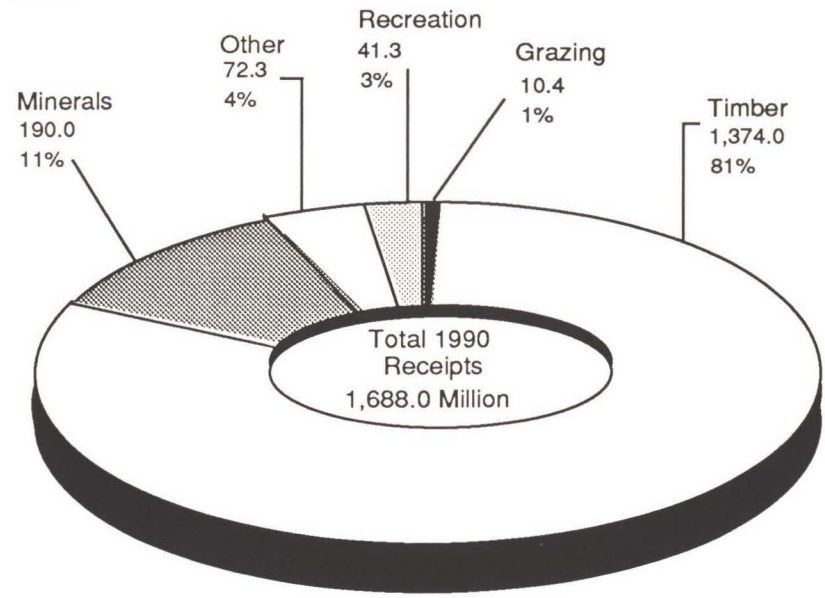
(Million Dollars)

	86	87	88	89	90
Expenditures	2,078	2,351	2,693	3,191	3,576
Receipts	1,321	1,458	1,618	1,836	1,688
Receipts as Percentage of Expenditures	63	62	60	57	47

- Planning should be completed in a reasonably short period of time.
- Planning should be people-oriented—encouraging, recognizing, and rewarding public participation.
- Planning should involve active leadership by Forest Service line officers.
- Planning should match analytical tools to the questions on hand.
- Planning should be locally oriented and nationally balanced.

Distribution of Receipts by Program

Million Dollars



FOREST MANAGEMENT

The national forests provide 12 percent of all the timber harvested in the United States. This compares with 49 percent from nonindustrial private forest lands, 32 percent from forest industry lands, and 7 percent from other public lands. National forests contribute 25 percent of the softwood sawtimber used for lumber and plywood.

In 1990, we sold 9.3 billion board feet of timber and harvested 10.5 billion board feet from the national forests. We offered sales of more than 1.0 billion board feet of timber in the Pacific Northwest. We did not award those sales, however, because of delays for spotted owl decisions and the need to complete timber purchaser qualification reviews.

We reduced the use of clearcutting by 27 percent in the national forests during 1990. We are shifting to other even-age methods that have fewer esthetic impacts and are using uneven-age harvest and regeneration methods where they are appropriate.

During 1990, we worked with public health agencies, universities, and pharmaceutical companies to ensure adequate supplies of taxol, a potent anticancer drug extracted from the bark of the Pacific yew, a tree which grows in several national forests. Taxol is expected to be a major cancer-treating chemical, large and steady supplies of which will be required.

TREE-PLANTING

President Bush has committed the Nation to a major tree-planting effort spanning a multiyear period. We have been active nationwide in promoting the planting of trees on both National Forest System and other lands.

In 1990, we planted 50 species of trees on 498,000 acres of national forest land. We also continued to support the Conservation Reserve Program, the Forestry Incentives Program, and the Agricultural Conservation Program in tree-planting efforts on non-Forest Service lands.

Overall, Americans planted 1.9 billion seedlings on 2.86 million acres of land. Nearly half of these seedlings (850 million) were planted on land managed by State and local governments or on nonindustrial private lands. Approximately 44 percent of the acres planted on private lands were on industry lands.

RECREATION

The national forests provide 40 percent of the outdoor recreation activities that take place on federally managed land—more than any other agency.

In 1990, we continued to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation on national forest land, while working to improve customer satisfaction and build partnerships. Many of our field units collected data on what customers want, developed marketing plans, installed improved toilet facilities, and designed maps to meet customer needs. We took the lead in producing an interagency draft design manual that describes how to design and construct facilities that are more accessible to forest visitors, including people with handicaps, the elderly, and children.

We continued to develop recreation partnerships with the American people. During 1990, the number of such formal partnerships increased to approximately 600. Partners include local, county, State, and Federal agencies, private interest groups, senior citizens, students, recreation industries, interpretive associations, and private businesses.

We designated $5.5 million for a recreation Challenge Cost-Share Program in 1990 and found partners that provided more than $12.8 million for recreation improvement projects.

1990 season fireline construction. Photo by Yuen-Gi Yee

FIRE MANAGEMENT

The Forest Service is the largest wildland fire management agency in the Nation. Working with Federal, State, and local agencies, we play a leading role in the training, development, mobilization, and support of wildland fire managers and firefighting personnel throughout the United States and in several foreign countries.

We experienced a severe fire season in 1990, with 10,505 fires burning 421,600 acres of National Forest System land by September 13. Because of abnormally severe weather conditions, we requested and received more than $20 million of fire severity funds to provide additional protection resources, mostly in Montana, Oregon, and Washington. We spent more than $10 million on fire suppression in California alone. Southern California had its driest winter in 133 years, following five straight years of drought.

We also introduced a new method of evaluating fire suppression capabilities in 1990. This method compares the fire organization against an ideal, most efficient level derived from the National Fire Management Analysis System. The most efficient level represents a fire organization in which presuppression and suppression costs and resource losses are minimized. Regions are expected to have organizations that are consistent with the level of funding allocated by the Washington Office.

We shared information and technology with seven countries (Mexico, Chile, Brazil, Costa Rica, the Soviet Union, Israel, and Canada) during 1990 in such areas as training course development, specialized equipment transfer, equipment loans, training assignments on fires, and program consultation.

WILDLIFE AND FISHERIES

The National Forest System has a great diversity of wildlife, fish, and plant species. We seek to maintain this biological diversity, protect and help endangered species to recover, and respond to public demands for recreational and commercial uses of fish and wildlife. We cooperate with State fish and wildlife agencies in maintaining animal populations and develop conservation programs with State wildlife agencies, other Federal agencies, and fisheries and wildlife conservation groups.

Seventeen percent of our recreation use in 1990 was by hunters, anglers, and nonconsumptive users of wildlife and fish. These users spent 42 million visitor days on National Forest System lands, valued at $1.03 billion for fishing, $636 million for hunting, and $441 million for nonconsumptive use of fish and wildlife.

We participated in cooperative programs, including "Join Us," an effort to strengthen public-private partnerships in wildlife habitat and fisheries management, and "Rise to the Future," a national effort emphasizing fisheries enhancement.

On the recommendation of a national task force, we implemented the "Every Species Counts" program in 1990 to strengthen our effort to protect endangered species. We are working with our partners to expand contributions to species recovery and conservation.

RESEARCH

The Forest Service conducts the most extensive program of integrated research in the world. The program improves resource productivity, reduces costs, enhances the effectiveness of forest management, and protects or improves environmental quality on America's 1.6 billion acres of forests and associated rangelands.

The eight regional experimental stations and the national Forest Products Laboratory conduct more than 2,800 studies at any one time, involving approximately 714 Forest Service scientists at 74 locations. Forest Service scientists work with researchers from other public agencies, universities and colleges, and the forest industry.

We concentrated our research efforts in 1990 in five broad areas: forest protection, resource analysis, forest management, forest environment, and forest products and harvesting. Research results in these areas will serve as the foundation for future research.

Within these five broad areas, we concentrated during 1990 on six critical national problems: global climate change; threatened, endangered, and sensitive species; water quality; southern forest productivity; catastrophic forest fires; and enhancement of forest-based economies in rural America.

COMMUNICATIONS

The Forest Service is dedicated to keeping people informed and involved as an essential step in forming a strong bond with the American people. Such a bond is basic to building a consensus on the wise management of the national forests and grasslands.

During 1990, we continued our efforts with Forest Service employees and cooperators to examine how best to build such a bond. We placed particular emphasis on providing information in the following eight areas:

- New Perspectives, a program aimed at managing the national forests and grasslands for a broader range of uses in a sustainable and more environmentally sensitive way.
- Land Management Planning, including the ongoing planning process and this year's land management critique.
- Planting trees through the President's grassroots tree-planting initiative and other programs.
- Working with people in Challenge Cost-Share Partnerships, volunteer programs, and other cooperative arrangements.
- Providing accessibility for all visitors to the national forests and grasslands.
- Protecting threatened and endangered species, particularly the spotted owl and the Mt. Graham red squirrel.
- Making knowledge available through technology transfer and publications of research findings.
- Improving rangeland quality through "Change on the Range," a program designed to emphasize riparian areas.

California redwoods. Photo by Carey Given

CONCLUSION

The events of 1990 were an exciting conclusion to the first century of the National Forest System. As we celebrate the centennial of the national forest during 1991, we can be sure that we will continue to face the challenge of determining what constitutes wise use of our precious forest and grassland resources.

Our activities during the past year have left us better prepared to enter the second century. We have a new long-range strategic plan in place. We have completed our study of how forest planning should be done (a notice of proposed rulemaking for our new forest planning regulations has been published in the Federal Register for public comment). Finally, we have embarked on many new and exciting programs designed to round out our forest management and to better emphasize such programs as wildlife and fisheries and recreation.

The Forest Service accomplishments provide a sound basis for managing the national forests and grasslands for a broader range of uses in a sustainable and more environmentally sensitive way—both in 1991 and in the rest of our second century.

The Forest Service

The Forest Service, U.S.Department of Agriculture, is responsible for Federal leadership in forestry. It carries out this role through four main activities:

- Protection and management of resources on 191 million acres of National Forest System lands.
- Research on all aspects of forestry, rangeland management, and forest resources utilization.
- Cooperation with State and local governments, forest industries, and private landowners to help protect and manage non-Federal forest and associated range and watershed lands.
- Participation with other agencies in human resource and community assistance programs to improve living conditions in rural areas.

SELECTED 1990 STATISTICS

Receipts	**$1.69 Billion**
Expenditures	**$3.58 Billion**
Permanent Full-time Employees	**32,375**
National Forest System	**191 Million Acres**
Mineral Cases Processed	**25,927**
Timber Sold	**9.3 Billion Board Feet**
Timber Harvested	**10.5 Billion Board Feet**
Reforestation	**498 Thousand Acres**
Grazing Permits Administered	**10,527**
Livestock Grazing	**9.6 Million Animal Unit Months**
Recreation Use	**263 Million Visitor Days**
Trail System	**114,366 Miles**
National Scenic Byways	**3,800 Miles**
National Wild and Scenic Rivers System	**3,369 Miles**
Wilderness	**33.3 Million Acres**
Wildlife and Fish Habitat Improvements	**489,100 Acres**
Watershed Improvements	**33,816 Acres**
Road System	**363,000 Miles**
National Forest System Lands Burned	**422 Thousand Acres**
Insect and Disease Suppression	**1.7 Million Acres**
Woodland Owners Assisted	**148,673**
Research Publications	**2,165**
Human Resource Programs	**125,949 Persons Served**

May 1991